

## PDF hosted at the Radboud Repository of the Radboud University Nijmegen

The following full text is an author's version which may differ from the publisher's version.

For additional information about this publication click this link.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2066/74464>

Please be advised that this information was generated on 2017-12-06 and may be subject to change.

# Three stories about regional salience: 'regional worlds', 'political mobilisation', and 'performativity'.<sup>i</sup>

**Draft version** – Final version published as : Lagendijk, Arnoud (2001): *Three stories about regional salience: 'Regional Worlds', 'political mobilisation' and 'performativity'*. *Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftsgeographie* 45(3-4), 139-158.

Arnoud Lagendijk, Nijmegen School of Management.  
a.lagendijk@nsm.kun.nl

## Abstract

Territoriality is an important dimension of knowledge production and application. Despite the ethereal nature of the product itself, knowledge is thought to originate from, and be anchored to, particular places. Over the last decades, studies on themes such as innovation systems and knowledge spillovers have pointed at and further explored the spatial dimension of knowledge production, suggesting that due to spatial boundedness of knowledge the region presents an essential site for innovation, production and policy-makers. The present paper will review this message of regional salience, by presenting three stories. The first story, the institutional-economic account, features the role of the economy. Core themes are the role of spatially embedded institutions in shaping 'Regional Worlds', and the 'proximity effect'. The second story features political actors and processes, and the way these have promoted and mobilised the region as a significant site of innovation, production and policy-making. Key aspects of this story are political regionalisation and regionalism, and the contribution from the regulation approach. The third story focuses on the message of regional salience itself, with as protagonists the authors of the message, namely academics. The question is to what extent the popularity and influence of the message of regional salience can be explained in terms of performance and circulation of the message itself. The conclusion will bring the various stories together, suggesting how the story of performativity bears on the story on political mobilisation, and how both these stories may serve to put the institutional-economic account into perspective.

## Introduction

Why is the region presented as a significant site of innovation, production and policy-making? Why is the region even presented as essential in the becoming of late-modern capitalism (MACLEOD 1999). Why does the literature on regional development sustain the idea of a "'rebirth' and 're-emergence' of regional and local economies as nodes within this new globalised capitalism" (MARTIN 2000, 90)? This paper identifies three stories that shed light on the issue of regional salience. The three stories each feature a different protagonist, and come to different conclusions about why the region is deemed so important.

- (1) The first story features the role of the economy, paying attention, in particular, to the role of spatially embedded institutions in shaping 'Regional Worlds'. A crucial element in this story is the *proximity effect*.
- (2) The second story features political actors and processes, and the way these have promoted and mobilised the region as a significant site of innovation, production and policy-making. Key aspects of this story are political regionalisation and regionalism.
- (3) The third story focuses on the message of regional salience itself, with as protagonists the authors of the message, namely academics. The question is to what extent the popularity and influence of the message of regional salience can be explained in terms of performance and circulation of the message itself.

Before presenting the three stories, a short introduction will be given of the major concepts underscoring the notion of regional salience. This introduction will set the stage on which the three stories on regional salience will be presented.

### **The staging of regional salience: introducing the TIM family**

The notion of the region as a significant site of innovation, production, and policy-making is not just advocated by one concept or theory, but by a whole family of concepts. Members of this family are concepts such as 'new industrial spaces', 'milieux innovateurs', 'industrial districts', 'clusters', 'regional innovation systems', 'learning regions', and 'regional worlds', labelled by MOULAERT and SEKIA (1999) as the territorial innovation models (TIMs). These concepts often go and work together. Many authors base their support for the notion of revived significance of the region not just on one concept, but on the parallel and interrelated development of various concepts (CF. STORPER 1995; LAWSON 1999; KEEBLE/WILKINSON 1999; ASHEIM 1992; COOKE/MORGAN 1998; MCNAUGHTON 2000). While it is not the intention of this paper to provide a concept genealogy, some observations on the history of various concepts may be useful.

A first observation is that many concepts appear to have followed similar steps in their development (LAGENDIJK 1997). Originally, concepts emerged as descriptive-analytical labels related to particular, situated phenomena of regional-economic development: 'new industrial spaces' to the growth of new successful regional economies in the US and Europe, 'industrial districts' to developments in the 'Third Italy', 'milieux innovateurs' to various high-tech areas across Europe, 'clusters' to specific sectoral and regional observations as part of PORTER's (1990) larger study on national competitiveness, and 'conventions' to the particular developments paths of (sub)metropolitan areas. While maturing, the concepts gained explanatory value by invoking emergent ideas from social and economic theory, such as theories on learning, innovation, institutions, social embedding, endogenous growth, industrial organisation, social capital and culture. This process was supported by the development of a range of heuristic concepts, including 'innovation networks', 'institutional thickness', 'associational structures' and 'governance', to signify and characterise particular regional phenomena. In addition, the TIM

concepts related to, and mobilised, each other to support their articulation and relevance (cf. BRAMANTI/MAGGIONE 1997; ASHEIM 1996; ENRIGHT 1994; STORPER 1997; COOKE 1998; EDQUIST/REES 2000). In doing so, the concepts appear to have converged and become more general, detaching themselves from the original laboratories of observation and expanding their realm of applicability. In the end, these metaphors "all refer to the importance of local embedding, networking, flexible organisation, the presence of market-sensitive institutions, [and] learning ability" (SWYNGEDOUW 2000, 547).

The next step in the concept history is characterised by a move from descriptive-analytical to prescriptive-strategic approaches. Gradually, districts, milieux, clusters, learning regions, etc. have turned into normative models for successful regional economic development. CAMAGNI (1995), for instance, argues that the milieu concept is not only relevant for explaining innovation process in core regions, but also serves as a normative model for laggard regions, in which milieux are potentially available. Industrial districts have been intensively used to promote networking, co-operation and collective learning as a route to localised economic development (SABEL 1992; MASKELL/MALMBERG 1999). In their critical analysis of UK regional business support policies, CURRAN and BLACKBURN (1994) argue that the industrial district model is employed as a normative restructuring [model](#) policy to support supply-side regional policies targeting SME development. Equally later concepts such as 'Learning Regions', 'Regional Innovation Systems' and 'institutional thickness' have quickly gained a strong normative connotation (ASHEIM 1996; BELLINI 1998; EDQUIST/REES 2000; MARTIN 2000). In STORPER's (1997) work, 'conventions', initially used to explain the observed emergence of territorially rooted learning economies as 'worlds of action', are translated into prescriptive keys for regional economic success. Regions should embark on the development of packages of conventions and relations that support "a trajectory of technology learning" (p. 267), enabling them to outrun competitors through 'faster and better' learning (p.265).

What is striking is how, in assuming a more prescriptive-strategic position, the TIM concepts took on universal aspirations. Although the concepts themselves stem from particular observations made in regions with unique social, economic and political configurations, they have been translated into general prescriptions for regional problems without much attention for differentiation between types of regions and regional problems. Some authors have strongly criticised this tendency. For instance, CURRAN and BLACKBURN (1994, 23) argue that the universal cure of Industrial Districts is based on an "hopelessly overstretched" use of the original, analytical concept. More generally, MARKUSEN (1998) accuses the literature of endorsing 'fuzzy concepts', based on 'scanty evidence', and resulting in 'wimpy policy'. Other authors see this convergence and broader applicability in more positive terms. LAWSON (1999), for instance, drawing on his observation that regional concepts increasingly correspond to business development concepts, concludes that is time for a general 'competence theory of the region' parallel to the 'competence theory of the firm'.

A final observation concerns the emphasis on intra-regional or local links. In the past, writings on certain concepts sought to theorise the relationship between local and non-local relationships. For instance, in their contribution to the milieu-approach, CREVOISIER and MAILLAT (1991) develop a behavioural matrix in which the position of local milieux in wider chains of production ('filières') is conceptualised. Similarly, one interpretation of regional innovation systems conveys the significance of interfaces with sectoral and national innovation systems (BRESCHI/MALERBA 1996). In a somewhat comparable way, AMIN and THRIFT (1992) picture industrial districts as 'neo-Marshallian' nodes, that act as the collective centres of excellence and co-ordination in global filières. However, these suggestions for an articulated view on local and non-local links, although generally appreciated, have not prevented that most attention is devoted to the role of local linkages and proximity. Much of the significance of the regional scale is attributed to the way proximity and local embedding support successful forms of knowledge production and economic activities (STERNBERG 1999). The invocation of recent insights from social and economic theory serves, in particular, to underscore the role of local linkages. Indeed, one could argue that the dedication to local linkages and proximity presents a linchpin of the TIM family. It is this linchpin that will be the focal point of the next section.

This brief analysis should not be read as an intention to derogate the members of the TIM family. Beyond any doubt, the TIM concepts present the cornerstones of what has become a new, exciting approaching to regional studies, providing a much more profound understanding of institutional and cultural dimensions of regional development. Moreover, these concept have been instrumental in the building of new bridges with other disciplines within social science, and in doing so, in creating a greater acknowledgement of, and interest in, the role of space in these other disciplines. This introduction only intended to offer a first hint of where the general emphasis on the significance of the region stems from. Through the development and articulation of these concepts, the literature has moved from a set of distinct signifiers of particular observations of regional development to a family of more generic and prescriptive concepts underscoring the notion of regional salience.

### **Story One: regional salience as an institutional-economic imperative**

The first story is actually a summary of what the TIM family members narrate themselves, namely that due to changes primarily in the economy the region has resurfaced as a fundamental unit of economic development and policy-making. A central theme in this story is the Marshallian notion of spatially rooted 'external economies', reformulated on the basis of recent insights into the 'knowledge economy' and social-institutional perspectives on economic development. While many fields of inquiry have inspired the revival of Marshallian thinking, two stand out, namely the transaction cost approach and institutional theory. The transaction cost approach based on the work of Coase and Williamson served to relate changes in industrial organisation, particularly shifts towards a more flexible, disintegration chain of production, to processes of spatial agglomeration. This link between vertical

disintegration and spatial agglomeration featured in the work of Scott and Storper (SCOTT 1983; SCOTT/STORPER 1986), in which it was combined with new theories on technological development and economic regulation. However, while the transaction cost approach supported the idea that a shift to more flexible production would induce spatial agglomeration, its rational economic premises and reasoning proved too narrow (cf. LUNDVALL 1993). In this respect, a more promising route was offered by the second source of inspiration, the institutional approach. The value of the institutional approach resides, amongst other aspects, in the fact that, by using notions such as institutions and social embedding, it can account for variations between economic actors and economic systems. The challenge economic geographers faced was to substantiate the role of space, to show that social embedding and the role of institutions would also underscore the notion of regional variation, through specific forms of regionalised 'external economies'. The argument may be summarised in three steps.

The first step involved relating business competitiveness to inter-firm interaction and the wider business environment. Drawing on the literature on the 'knowledge economy' and learning (LUNDVALL 1993), business competitiveness is considered to rely increasingly on the quality and management of the environment external to the firm. In institutional terms, this translates into a stronger focus on inter-firm relationships on the one hand, and embedding and institutions on the other. This emphasis on the external relations has informed, in particular, the concept of clustering. Essential is the recognition that inter-firm and inter-organisational relationships are, to a substantial extent, of a non-market nature, captured through the notion of social embedding (HARRISON 1992), inspired by the work of Granovetter. Couched in institutional terms, through interacting firms and related organisations shape institutions both in a more formal (organisational) and informal way (rules of the game, conventions). These institutions, in turn, guide the behaviour of firms and organisations through providing a basis for mutual expectations and trust, routines of behaviour, and collective capacities for action and sanctioning, amongst others.

The second step concerns the role of space, more specifically of *proximity* and *spatial agglomeration*. Proximity, so the argument goes, has a strongly facilitating and constitutive role in inter-firm and inter-organisational relationships. So the impact of inter-firm relationship is most prominent at local/regional scale, as expressed through the classical concept of '*localisation*'. The same applies to the embedding in the wider environment and the role of institutions, as captured by the notion of '*urbanisation*'. The local/regional scale, in particular, favours the joint development and exchange of *tacit knowledge*, considered as a vital ingredient of innovation and hence sustained competitiveness. According to MASKELL (1999, 36) "being embedded in a mesh of local connections helps firms to survive and thrive". As a result, social embedding turns into *spatial embedding*. Furthermore, because local connections promoted processes of clustering and specialisation - in the line with Marshall's original observations - the notion of embedding became closely associated with that of *spatial agglomeration*.

This association has been emphasised, in particular, in the industrial district literature (HARRISON 1992).

The third step introduces the issue of governance. Combining the two observations that an institutional base sustains collective capacities for learning and production (step 1) and that such institutional bases are spatially embedded (step 2) underscored the idea that the region provided an suitable scale for strategic governance. In the words of COOKE and MORGAN (1998, 29), the region embodies the “most effective scale at which to nurture the high-trust relations that are essential for learning and innovations”. This nurturing, in turn, accumulates into associational capacity, which underpins the ability of firms, state and other organisations within an associational ensemble to keep abreast of innovation. Through the capacity to monitor and reflect upon the overall regional position, and to shape and undertake collective strategic action, the region itself is endowed with 'voice' and 'agency' sustaining its economic development trajectory.

As argued above, the linchpin on which this story of localisation depends is the role of proximity. The proximity effect is what turns social embedding into spatial embedding, what makes inter-firm and inter-organisational interaction especially effective at the local and regional scale, and which makes regional governance structures effective in supporting this interaction. Hence, in this institutional-economic story, regional salience represents a functional responses to the demands of the emerging knowledge economy, which, because of the importance of interaction and embedding, puts a premium on proximity and localisation. However, the spatial dimension of the story goes further than featuring proximity and the regional scale. Not only are the roles of institutions and strategic governance tied to regional *scale*, they are also tied to *dedicated* regions. Regions are characterised, to use the words of STORPER (1997, 267) by specific 'packages of conventions and relations' underpinning innovation and production in particular regions. Similarly, associational ensembles pertain to particular, demarcated regions, like Wales, Emilia-Romagna or Potomac. The result is an ontological divide between a specific region as an essential, and strategic site of innovation, production and policy-making, and the world outside as the global marketplace, each characterised by their own form of economic co-ordination:

- The region, 'in here', harbours the exchange of tacit knowledge, collective learning process and the growth of associational structures. Regions are the realms of 'untraded interdependencies', which, through proximity and embedding effects, are constrained by the region's boundaries. Economic co-ordination occurs through trust, reciprocity and long-term strategic agreements, uphold by regionally embedded institutions (HOLLINGSWORTH/BOYER 1997).
- 'Out there' is the global marketplace, ruled primarily by market forces, and driven by increased competition, globalisation, demand differentiation as well as shorting product life cycles to which regions have to respond. Economic co-ordination takes place largely through the market, supported by market-oriented institutions such as WTO, IMF, OECD, and EU. Knowledge is exchanged in codified forms.

A logical step from this divide is that the region itself turns into a competitive unit, lifting the notion of competitiveness from the level of the firm to that of the region. In the words of AMIN and THRIFT (1994, 258), regional adaptability is not based "on the competition of firms but of forms". This concords with HOLLINGSWORTH and BOYER's (1997, 38, my emphasis) observation that "As social sciences increasingly recognise that non-economic domestic institutions are important determinants of success in world markets, economic competition is increasingly becoming competition over different *forms* of social systems of production". Consequently, the shift from 'firms' to 'forms' as the basis for competition bears directly on the interpretation of institutions. The institutions at the regional level, from conventions to organisational forms, shift from second-order variables - supporting business competencies and behaviour - to first-order variables, that is, seen as directly shaping regional competencies underpinning 'form' competitiveness (also called 'structural competitiveness'). Regional performance is thus attributed to a functionally coherent act of locally embedded institutions (PECK 2000). Instead of autonomous agents, firms impersonate the strength, or weakness of the regional institutional basis. In effect, this chimes neatly with PORTER's claim (2000, 254) that "much of competitive advantage lies outside a given company (...), residing instead in the location of its business units".

Turning regions into strategic sites that engage with 'form' competition has made a further contribution to the prescriptive emphasis in the literature. Not only is this implied in LAWSON's (1999) 'competence-theory of the region' already mentioned; it is also manifested in the increasing popularity of Porter's cluster approach as a general regional development tool (GLASMEIER 2000). It is also apparent in the work on industrial districts, where, after a first move from social-cultural to institutional-organisational aspects, the interest has shifted to how industrial districts may *survive* on the basis of district-based 'social and political leadership' (ZEITLIN 1992, 290) and 'managerial leadership' (AMIN 2000, 165). AMIN (1999) points out the need for a strategic management culture, while STORPER (1997) advocates the use of strategic assessment and collective learning practices in ways comparable to the 'Learning Organisation' literature in strategic management (cf. LAGENDIJK/KRAMSCH 2001). More generally, according to MCNAUGHTON (2000) the nurturing of 'external economies' at the regional level requires some form of hierarchical arrangements providing network co-ordination and strategic direction. What is essential for the present story is that these managerial recommendations are instrumental to the creation of adequate regional 'packages of conventions and relations' and governance structures, to perform the 'functionally coherent act of locally embedded institutions' underpinning regional competitiveness. The question remains what these suggestions mean in more political terms, something which will be addressed in the political story.

The institutional-economic approach to regional development raises two core questions. The first is that of proximity. Does proximity, in the sense of spatial proximity, indeed play such a critical and imperative role? How much evidence is there for this claim, and to what extent is this critical role sensitive



to place and time? The second question concerns the emphasis on the region, versus that of other spatial scales and (other) agents such as the firm. The institutional perspective presented here appears to limit the explanatory role of individual firms and prioritise the regional level, as a causal entity as well as an agent. The question is then, to what extent does this perspective amount to reification of the region and, in an epistemological sense, to methodological regionalism? These questions will be addressed in the two following sections.

### **Challenging regional salience based on economic-institutional reasoning: from spatial to organisational-institutional proximity.**

The literature is full with quotes claiming the importance of propinquity in the age of the 'knowledge economy', whether the perspective is that of the firm, of innovation, or institutional. COOKE and MORGAN (1998, 202), for instance, claim that "Firms are increasingly forced towards sub-national interaction amongst suppliers and innovation support organisations, especially where tacit knowledge is being exchanged, and pulled towards global, or at least transnational, interaction for learning of a more codified nature, acquisition of more standardised inputs, and, of course, for sales". Referring to the crucial role of tacit knowledge exchange, MASKELL (1999, 48) states that: "innovation processes - requiring a high level of interaction, dialogue and exchange of information - may be conducted long distance, but is often less expensive, more reliable and easier to conduct locally". Note how both quotes endorse the region-global divide discussed above. Finally, AMIN (1999), following an institutional view on relational assets, stresses the fact that competitiveness, which is increasingly based on learning and the use of tacit knowledge, is rooted in relations of proximity. This corresponds to STORPER's (1997, 48) view that differentiation in resources and conventions arises most markedly at the regional level, through shaping the 'localised conventional-relational' worlds of production. This may amount to a self-reinforcing process: "Just as proximity affects the formation of conventions, so convention shapes what goes on in territorially proximate contexts" (p. 71). Interestingly, STORPER (1997, p. 71) admits that specific forms of knowledge (..) "can be 'localised' in a restricted technological, organisational, or professional space that is, in certain interpretative networks that transcend local geographical space", but, in his view, the impact of this possibility is limited. Outside the geography literature, the significance of proximity has been emphasised through work on endogenous growth, knowledge spillovers, and innovation systems (cf. EDQUIST/REES 2000; ACS 2000).

Does proximity indeed play such a fundamental role? Various authors have actually challenged the proximity claim, using different perspectives. For instance, detailed analysis at the firm level by ALDERMAN (2000), reveals how innovation within engineering business does not so much depend on the local environment. More important is the internal (corporate) culture of the enterprise, as it evolves by constant interaction between the company and its environment in different forms (market, suppliers, etc) at various spatial levels. Using an extensive database on manufacturing firms, ECHEVERRI-CARROLI and BRENNAN (1999) set out to test the proximity thesis,

assuming that intellectual breakthroughs will travel over short distances only. The results show a mixed picture. Regions and cities holding core positions in knowledge accumulation, such as Silicon Valley, confirm the strong relation between knowledge production and proximity. In other places it is accessibility that counts most, revealing the significance of non-local relationships. However, MARKUSEN's (1998) detailed research on spatial clustering in Silicon Valley itself throws serious doubts on the role of local connectedness and endogenous growth. Essential but ignored factors in Markusen's view are the role of larger firms, the state and specific historical factors. Based on a more managerial perspective on inter-firm linkages, Kanter advocates the significance of a 'cosmopolitan' outlook in business development. This implies that: "Proximity has not disappeared as one of the criteria for suppliers; but it has been joined by so many other criteria that it no longer confers an automatic advantage" (KANTER 1995, 97), contradicting the premises of regionalist geographers.

Reassessing the purported link between knowledge spillovers and proximity, KARLSSON and MANDUCHI (2000) make a critical contribution to the debate. Reviewing the empirical evidence, the authors conclude that many studies tend to overemphasise the proximity effect, while counter-evidence seems to be neglected. The overemphasis stems partly from the fact that studies ignore existing spatial patterns of business locations. If, in a certain sector, firms have become clustered historically, for whatever reasons, the finding that knowledge exchange generally takes place at a short distance does not reveal much. What local exchange reflects is the scope of geographical options, not a proximity effect. They also criticise the fact that most studies exclude the possibility of inter-firm links being articulated at various spatial levels, thus forcing knowledge links to be classified as either fully 'local' or 'non-local'. Finally, they raise a theoretical question by making a comparison with the academic practice of knowledge exchange. It appears that scientific knowledge, even of a tacit nature, seems to travel rather easily. Indeed, academic conferences and dense interpersonal networks across the globe assist in a constant flow of codified and tacit forms of knowledge vital for the development of academic individuals and work. Is there any reason to believe, Karlsson and Manduchi wonder, that engineering and entrepreneurial knowledge - as vital ingredients for economic development - would be more localised than scientific knowledge? The work of Alderman mentioned before suggests that this is not the case. Similarly, research on the emerging computer and video games by CORNFORD/NAYLOR/ROBINS (2000), shows how important national and international meeting points and channels are in disseminating tacit knowledge between producers in different territories. Clustering does occur in these sectors, but largely due to certain environmental factors such as the labour market, the origin of the entrepreneurs (like specific universities) and access to communication infrastructure.

A theoretical underpinning of the limited salience of local connectedness comes from the French 'proximity research school'. Drawing from extensive work on the role of space in the exchange of tangible and non-tangible items, BURMEISTER (2000) concludes that the notion of spatial proximity should be

replaced by that of *organisational* and *institutional proximity*. Through the development of the communication infrastructure, space has shifted from a constraint to a field of organisational opportunity and co-ordination. This certainly applies to tangible goods: "Industries such as the automobile industry, textile and clothing or the food producing sector illustrate the transformations in the organisation of production and circulation and the relative weakening of the spatial constraint" (BURMEISTER 2000, 58). A good example from the automotive industry is the way Japanese firms implemented the Just-in-Time concept in Europe (CHARLES/FENG 1994). Whereas Just-in-Time in Japan had been associated with necessary proximity between suppliers and assemblers, advanced logistical solutions in Europe allowed for much longer inter-firm distances, thus reducing the need for proximate supplier investments. Another case is offered by the evidence collected by GERTLER (1999), showing that intense user-producer interaction often occurs at international levels. Not only are firms able to overcome distance constraints, they also use space as a strategic variable. Gertler's cases, for instance, show how firms deliberately move from a strong regionally rooted supply network to an international supply network, to shift strategic interdependencies. Another author adopting a firm perspective, SCHOENBERGER (1999), illustrates how corporate organisations sometimes establish branches 'at a distance' in what for the company is a peripheral location, to temporarily facilitate specific, 'off-centre' learning processes.

Shifting from a 'natural', towards a more contingent and strategic perception of space qualifies the notion of spatial proximity. In Burmeister's approach, the management of inter-firm flows is determined primarily by shared perceptions and contractual relationships between organisations, much more than spatial attributes. This also applies, moreover, to the flow of intangible items such as knowledge, which is facilitated in particular by *institutional proximity*. In the words of BURMEISTER (2000, 63): "In its institutional dimension, proximity results in an institutional framework for interaction: shared representations, rules and norms, cognitive frameworks as well as formal institutions that stabilise the context of interactions." What appears to emerge from this shift from spatial to organisational-institutional proximity is an rising emphasis on networks as sites of interaction. Obviously these networks are located in space, they are *spatialised* networks. Moreover, some of these networks may be strongly concentrated in space, as manifested by the production networks in the Third Italy or certain hi-tech agglomerations. But we should not overlook the fact that in many cases networks of high interaction are spatially dispersed. Over time, many economic sectors, like our own academic world, have developed a myriad of ways through which close and intensive relationships are maintained over long distances. Hence, the essential point is that it is at the network rather than territorial level that the role of institutions should be addressed, in the way they sustain and guide the processes of interaction across the network. Institutions supporting inter-organisational interaction are primarily embedded within *networks*, and only then, through the spatial characteristics of these networks, in space.

To conclude, the argument presented so far throws serious doubt on the critical role of spatial proximity. However, what remains unchallenged is the

significance of inter-firm and inter-organisational relationships, and that of embedding. On the contrary, what is suggested is that the notion of proximity should be redefined in terms of inter-organisational relationships and embedding, through a network approach. Then, though examining the spatial characteristics of specific networks of production, capital, communication, and consumption, the particular *spatial* attributes of organisational and institutional proximity can be further assessed. This may lead to an articulated view incorporating both local and 'transcended' non-local relationships. Indeed, some recent work in geography, especially on business development and learning, hints at a stronger interest in non-local relationships (OINAS/MALECKI 1999; AMIN 1999). Future work is likely to pursue this direction. What is ironic, however, is that, as explained before, a similar agenda was proposed by the initial advocates of the milieu approach, which focused on the intersection between 'filières' (production networks) and territories. In that light, the growing attention for non-local links could be reinterpreted as a reversal of the 'localist' trend of the last two decades.

In defense of the advocates of 'regional salience', it may be appropriate to make a distinction between a 'fundamental' and 'critical' readings of localisation. The 'fundamental' reading, on the one hand, stems from Piore and Sabel's ushering in of the 'second industrial divide' and their notion of 'flexible specialisation'. This concept suggests that the economy, as a whole, has become decentred, turning regions integrally into the building blocks of economic development and competitiveness. One could argue that this reading does not stand up against the various critical observations summarised above. The 'critical' version, on the other hand, equally holds that regions have become important economic motors, but claims that it is only *some* regions that will manage this. Such 'lucky' regions are the 'new industrial spaces' like Silicon Valley, and Third Italy, or core metropolitan areas like London or New York. Through their innovative power, supported by the local institutional-conventional basis, these core regions have evolved as central nodes in the global circuits of production, capital and communication (cf. STORPER 1997; AMIN/THRIFT 1994).

Admittedly, the 'critical' reading hints at a more realistic and critical picture of regional development, characterised by uneven development and asymmetrical power relations. What remains a problem in these 'critical' approaches is that they still perceive the role of institutions and conventions only at the level of the region. The strong ontological divide between the region and the world outside still prevails. There is little scope for 'organisational' or 'institutional' proximity to transcend the regional level. Although it is accepted that, in general, industries do not entirely agglomerate in one or a few places - 'pure territorialisation' in the words of STORPER (1997) - the notion and effect of proximity remains strongly associated the region. Moreover, the sole emphasis on the region makes these approaches still susceptible to the problems of spatial reification and methodological regionalism, issues which will be discussed in the next section.

What has not been touched so far is the issue of 'form competition'. Can 'form competition' play a role without a strong proximity effect? The answer is

yes, but instead of a institutional economic argument, it should be framed in a political argument. This will be further illustrated in the sections below.

### **Story Two: regional salience as a product of political mobilisation.**

If the asserted significance of the regional scale is not a reflection of fundamental changes in the space economy, not the inevitable outcome of the proximity imperative invoked by the knowledge economy, than what explains the strength of the 'regional salience' message? And what is then the foundation of the rising importance of the region as a site of business support, economic development policy, and public-private networking? As an alternative explanation of regional salience, this section will tell a political story, or more precisely, a story of political mobilisation.

An author who has strongly criticised the presentation of the region as a kind of natural unit playing its predestined role in the global economy is KEATING. Warning against the traps of spatial reification, and, even worse, of anthropomorphism, i.e. regarding the region in its entirety as a core agent in social processes, KEATING (1998, 13), pictures the region as a 'fragile formation', that should be analysed through the lens of social and political construction. The region is not a pre-given ontological unit, but one which is socially and politically created. This also means that, although regions may be subject to pervasive economic pressures, any strong functional logic should be rejected. Instead of the global economy, important starting points for regional analysis are *identity* and *politics*. An essential question is how the articulation of regional identities shape the interests, agendas and actions of regional actors. Regional economic agendas that focus on local networking and competence-building result from the collective aspirations of regional actors, often mobilised through 'growth coalitions' or 'development coalitions' (ENNALS/GUSTAVSEN 1999) and regional development agencies, to strengthen the regional economic position and identity.

The rising significance of the region is now explained primarily in terms of not economic but administrative-political changes, captured under the labels of *regionalisation* and *regionalism*. Regionalisation refers to a process of decentralisation of political power and (even more) operational responsibility by national states. The reasons for such decentralisation vary considerably, but generally include a combination of ideological, political and organisational trends (WRIGHT 1998). Where regionalisation essentially refers to a top-down process, driven by the state, regionalism is associated with a bottom-up process driven by local actors and interests. Regionalism can play an important role in the attempts by local actors to decrease local dependency on the national state. A marked manifestation of processes of regionalisation and regionalism has been the proliferation of new governance structures at the regional level, often in form of partnerships between the local state, civil society and business (HEALEY/KHAKEE/MOTTE/NEEDHAM 1997), resulting in regional development coalitions.

What follows from these observations is that the actors driving regionalisation processes are not necessarily connected with the regional level; they often operate at other spatial levels such as the nation. Indeed, WRIGHT (1998) regards it one of the paradoxes of regionalisation that it is not automatically associated with 'hollowing out' the central state. On the contrary, regionalisation has also been employed by the central state for 'problem dumping', as a convenient transfer of intractable problems and costs, for instance in the area of environmental clean-up and social polarisation. Another, more positive form of regional mobilisation by actors at other spatial levels is the use of the region as a 'laboratory' for practices of socio-economic engineering. A good example of this is the way national governments such as the French and British have recently engaged in promoting regional cluster strategies, and the way the European Union has facilitated regional associational strategy making through its RTP/RIS/RITTS programmes (LAGENDIJK/RUTTEN 2002). The (inter)national agencies are interested primarily in 'mainstreaming' the lessons from these 'regional laboratories' for dissemination to other regions. The goal of such regional policies is not to support particular regions, but to promote competitiveness and cohesion for the whole territory. Like in the case of regional action 'from within', the core point is that regionalisation is not a structural phenomenon responding to a new institutional-economic logic, but something that is grounded in particular intentions pursued by particular agents.

Compared with the institutional-economic approach presented before, the political approach implies two essential reversals in argumentation. The first concerns the shift in the meaning of regional competitiveness. In the institutional-economic view, achieving regional competitiveness on the basis of an institutionally supported 'learning trajectory' represents the *goal* of regional development. This goal, in turn, is imposed and conditioned by global market-economic forces combined with the logic of localisation. Shaping a regional identity through developing and mobilising unique (non-ubiquitous) resource and qualities plays an important role, but this role is *instrumental*. It serves the competitiveness goal. In a political approach, the logic is reversed. Now regional identity and values set the goal of regional development. This may include cherishing of certain ways of life, certain work practices, a certain level of political autonomy, etc. Regional competitiveness strategies now turn into an instrument, through which such social-economic and political ambitions can be expressed and performed. Regional politics and identity (regionalism) thus *drive*, instead of serve, the localisation script. As indicated above, it is not only for the region itself that regional competitiveness strategies may be instrumental, they can also serve political aspirations from (inter)national actors who seek to use of the regional economic arena as a 'laboratory' for innovation and economic development.

The second reversal concerns the role of regional competencies. In the institutional-economic approach, localisation emerges as a kind of script that involves grasping and mobilising opportunities offered by 'associational economies' germane to the regional level. The task for the region is to simply enact the localisation script following from an institutional-economic logic. In a political approach, there are no such economies about to be grasped and

enacted. On the contrary, WRIGHT (1998) points out that, rather than responding to given opportunities, regionalisation *exposes* regional competence problems. This involves, in particular, competencies directly related to the shaping of associational structures, such as durable and legitimate leadership, financial resources, expertise of budgetary and technical nature, knowledge of vital social and economic networks, local entrepreneurial expertise, adequate public infrastructure, and a regulatory and social environment suitable for public-private alliances. Equally, tying firms to the region is not something that happens almost automatically, induced by localisation, but something that may require a lot of hard work and persuasion. When studying 'institutions' and 'conventions' at a regional level, it is the capacity to undertake such 'tying' and develop adequate competencies that should receive primary attention.

These reversals come with a different understanding of the notion of proximity and spatial embedding. By rejecting a 'natural' proximity imperative, the creation of regional associational structures should be perceived as the result of strengthening and retaining organisational and institutional proximity within regional boundaries. Such regional binding does not represent an inescapable spatial-economic logic, but is a reflection of the ambitions and strategies of actors - business and non-business - involved in regional development. Accordingly, the notion of spatial embedding shifts from a determining to an active image (PIKE/LAGENDIJK/VALE 2000). Rather than seeing the direct spatial environment as an essential, and almost insuperable determinant for business competitiveness, the ways firms interact with their environment, including resulting interdependencies, are contingent upon deliberate action. Space, in short, turns into a strategic variable, that can be manipulated not only by firms, as argued in the previous section, but also by public actors.

Consequently, regions with better associational competencies may be more successful in 'embedding' firms, tying them within regional networks, than regions lacking such competencies. To use the well-known expression of MARKUSEN (1996), some regions manage to become 'sticky places' in 'slippery spaces', that is, they manage to locally anchor clustered business activities that could also have located elsewhere in a more dispersed pattern. In Markusen's view, the result can be for instance a locally concentrated supply network around a major branch plant ('hub-and-spokes'), a more traditional industrial district characterised by dense networks of SMEs, or a region depending on state-funded activities such as a university or defense industry.

What follows from this political approach is that regional ambitions to become 'sticky' are not just an inevitable response to institutional-economic imperatives. Rather, they reflect a deliberate regional political project that frames a dedicated region as a strategic site. Often cloaked within a benign competitiveness discourse, concepts from the TIM family such as clusters and 'Learning Regions' are mobilised to nurture a collaborative regional world 'in here' to strengthen its position against the competitive world 'out there'. This raises critical questions about who governs and runs such projects, who

benefits and which norms and values guide their development. Some authors, indeed, have been very critical about what they regard as 'boosterist' regional political practices. LOVERING (1999) claims that such 'sticky' practices are prone to cater for partisan interests, notably close alliances between dominant businesses and local politicians. Present activities of Regional Development Agencies and public-private-partnerships seem to endorse this observation. In SWYNGEDOUW's view (2000, 551), regional strategies 'heavily rely on clusters of elites that, despite their internally heterogeneous and conflicting positions, are able to create a fairly coherent and relatively stable 'growth coalition'. Such practices thus appear to compromise fundamental norms of democracy and accountability.

Advocates of bottom-up regional development projects have attempted to counter this critique by pointing at the social nature of such regional projects. AMIN (1999) frames regional development in terms of participatory politics, active citizenship, and strong institutionalisation of collective interests. Inclusive, bottom-up, progressive growth coalitions should thus be distinguished from regressive, closed, elite based coalitions (cf. AMIN/THRIFT 1995). Similarly, STORPER (1997, 191) assigns a strong role to progressive local groups in shaping regional worlds: "local groups of people are constantly re-differentiating their practices and relations at the same time that rounds of bureaucratic standardisation sweep over them from the management schools and control centres of the world (...)". However, the previous section already indicated that the same literature tends to rely heavily on managerialist thinking and concepts in advocating regional agency. A tension thus appears between the claim for social responsibility and the need for an effective process of shaping collective visions and actions at a regional level.

### **Transcending the economic-institutional and political variants? Regional salience according to the Regulation approach.**

The argument so far has sketched a bipolar story of regional salience. In the institutional-economic variant (the one endorsed by the TIM family), regional salience has been presented as the *natural outcome* resulting from the way the emerging global knowledge economy rewards the development of spatially rooted institutional configurations. The political variant, on the other hand, suggests regional salience should be attributed primarily to political-administrative changes that have induced the search for *opportunities* for regional networking matching regional political ambitions and agendas. This change in position was accompanied by a shift from emphasis on spatial proximity *inducing* localisation, to organisational-institutional proximity *enabling* processes of localisation. In an attempt to see to what extent the opposition between the economic-institutional and political variants may be transcended, this section will take inspiration from the Regulation approach. As indicated by PECK (2000), the strength of the Regulation approach resides in the way economic and non-economic factors are intertwined, and in how the role of institutional configurations and social regulation are understood in the wider context of capitalist development. The spatial context



is understood through the notion of scaling. More specifically, the role of the region is understood by the scaling of specific institutional and political processes at the regional level, while this scaling, in turn, is related to overall trends and shifts in the capitalist economy.

An author who has contributed significantly to explaining the more salient position of the region in terms of scaling is SWYNGEDOUW (1997, 2000) In Swyngedouw's view, the last decades have witnessed a process in which forms of co-ordination and regulation organised at the nation-state level have either been scaled up to the international level (notably regarding trade and finance), while other elements have been scaled down to the urban and regional level (notably bearing on production and reproduction). The prime driver of this process is elite power: "new choreographies of elite power strategies, whether political or economic, produce a restless landscape of changing institutions, actors and socio-economic processes, that, taken together, give form, coherence and trajectory to 'the urban' or to 'the region'" (SWYNGEDOUW 2000, 542). The elites, described by Swyngedouw as 'glocal' (local-global), use regions as their innovation laboratories that permit the shaping of territorial growth trajectories in the image of dominant or hegemonic elite coalitions. The result is that some regions, that is, the 'lucky' ones, will evolve as 'new industrial spaces' and control centres in the reshuffling global networked economy: "In this networked economy, (...) it is a relatively limited number of urban and regional economic growth engines (...) that have become nodal points in the governance and restructuring of these global networks" (p. 546). The 'lucky' regions play this regulatory role nested within other regulatory scales, including the national and, increasingly, the international, as orchestrated by 'glocal' elite power.

The concept of scaling sheds a new and challenging light on the question of regional salience. Certain local economic activities and actors are successful, so appears, because they also partake in, and shape, global processes. Successful regions and global competition are two sides of the same coin, induced by the emergence of a 'new scalar gestalt of the space economy' (SWYNGEDOUW 2000, 547). By emphasising the role of glocal elites, Swyngedouw drives home the message that without proper political analysis, the understanding of the regional position is doomed to fail. 'Regional competitiveness' is not a neutral term signalling regional performance, but an expression of political mobilisation by dominant economic groups.

However, various questions remain. One question is to what extent the concept of 'glocal elites' itself needs further elaboration. For instance, what is the significance of recent tendencies in neo-Marxist literature to pay more attention to the differentiation between dominant economic groups, and the role of alliances with administration and labour? More specifically, how do 'glocal elites' relate to regional development coalitions, and the competition between spatial coalitions? And how should we theorise the regional state? Another fundamental issue concerns the institutional dimension. While quite clear about the social-political dimension, what remains a question in Swyngedouw's account how the emerging scalar regulatory complex sustains capitalist economic development. The regional level provides essentially a

scale, in conjunction with the global drive for free flows of trade and finance, for organising competitive forms of *production*, based on the mobilisation of innovation-oriented institutional capacities (networks, milieux). What is less clear is how this scalar regulatory complex may secure the relative stability of two other core conditions for the survival of the capitalist system, the level of consumption and investment.

Other authors have also used the regulatory approach to depict the region as an essential site of regulation (DIGIOVANNA 1996; COOKE 1992). Through their capacity to provide a basis for trust-building, social compromise and collective vision through spatially embedded institutions, regions emerge as sites well adapted for harbouring new forms of flexible production. The regulatory dimension thus provides a kind of a social glue through which alliances of producers and assisting public and technology organisations, together secured a regional learning trajectory and thereby its competitive performance, plus a certain degree of wealth distribution within its own patch. The result is an image of a new *institutional-spatial fix* with the capacity to mediate economic co-ordination problems especially on the production side of capitalist development. Again, what is lacking in these accounts is a concern with wider issues of macro-economic stability. A regulatory perspective that restricts itself to production, in the sense of regulation FOR competition, is incomplete. Through history, capitalism has also required regulation OF competition, to secure basic levels and patterns of wealth distribution and investment. Currently, the erosion of 'Fordist' nation-state arrangements appears to have left an institutional vacuum in the regulation of consumption and investment (PECK/TICKELL 1994). To what extent the region, in articulation with global arrangements, will be able to fill this vacuum remains an open question. An alternative perception is that regions, instead of major regulatory sites, play the role of a temporary fix for providing relatively stable production and income-generation platforms within a global economic jungle. Instead of processes of political (down)scaling, the significance of the regional level then depends largely on the 'ability of local economies to construct complementary modes of insertion within national and supra-national economic dynamics' (HAY 1995, 398).

Apart from their narrowly productionist focus, PECK (2000) also criticises regulatory accounts of the region for their limited analytical qualities. In particular, Peck accuses advocates of the 'flexible specialisation' thesis of having read off systematic and predictive conclusions from tendentious developments at the regional level. Also, rather than truly investigating the specific *effects* of institutions in particular cases, economic outcomes tended to become uncritically attributed to observed appearances of institutions, institutional coherence and institutional processes (cf. MCNAUGHTON 2000). The result was, in PECK's (2000, 66) view, a 'vulgar rendering' of the Regulation approach. Recent accounts focusing on 'globalisation' have tended to be more aware of institutional differentiation and scalar aspects of institutional developments. Nevertheless, also here the danger looms of new orthodoxy sustaining an overstylised image of the region 'resurgent' in the global economy. Indeed, even more than for flexible specialisation, the concept of 'globalisation' appears to exert an overwhelming rhetorical power,

which quickly overshadows more humble attempts to tell qualified and differentiated stories about the role of institutions in regional development.

From this admittedly short and simplified account of the contribution from the Regulation approach, two images of the region appear. The first image portrays the region as a site politically mobilised and strengthened, supported by the *downscaling* of regulatory functions primarily from the nation state. Selected 'regional worlds' emerge as nodal centres in the global network economy. The spatially embedded institutions securing regional innovation and growth appear to meet the power positions and strategies of 'glocal elites' in the capitalist economy. Unfortunately, how this exactly works, especially from a broader regulatory perspective, remains largely an untold story. The second image, on the other hand, corresponds to an image of the region as a site with the potential institutional and associational power to insert itself adequately in national and international economic processes, thus providing a kind of safe haven in a volatile and crisis-ridden global economy. While more modest in its claims, by its emphasis on local agency the second image also seems to undergird the kind of managerialist turn observed above. From a 'world' view on capitalist development and its spatial dimension, the question narrows down to the issue of how, based on an institutional-regulatory perspective, a region can secure competitive production *for the sake of the region's own survival and prosperity*. In this view, as will be argued below, the region appears almost as an *upscaled* firm. So, paradoxically, an approach that in its origins and premises fundamentally opposes a neo-liberal, market-oriented perspective on economic development, may thus well end up advocating policy views and scripts that are very much in line with neo-liberal prescriptions.

### **Story Three: regional salience performed**

Two stories of regional salience have been told so far. The first one presented regional salience as the product of major economic processes that have put a premium on regionally embedded institutions. The second story turned the attention to political actors and processes that have an interest in promoting the position of the region. The third story also takes up the theme of political promotion, but seeks to apply this to the message of regional salience itself, including the authors behind it. The third story, then, differs from the previous two in that it views the authors of regional salience, i.e. academics, as directly *implicated* in articulating and promoting the message of regional salience. Instead of being distanced observers that detect and summarise real processes of political and economic change out there, we as academics, with the help of non-academic co-authors such as policy-makers, are deeply entangled in thinking up and scripting stories of regional salience and shaping a reality in which these stories fit. The knowledge on regional salience is socially constructed, and the way it is socially constructed helps to understand the nature and impact of the message (MACLEOD 1999).

The core concept underpinning the third story is that of *performance* or *performativity* (LAW 1999; BARNES 2000). The key point about performativity is that "reality is brought into being by the very act of performance itself"

(BARNES 2000, 4) In the context of regional salience, this means that by asserting, studying, and portraying the region as a significant economic site, this all contributes to *producing* the region as a significant site. In addition, what counts is the *success* of a performance, which following actor-network thinking is explained in terms of network articulation. The success of a performance depends on the way a performance travels, and how these travels result in a network lining up other actors, such as dominant questions, beliefs, conceptions, books, images, authors, and organisations. Through travelling and translating, new elements are enrolled - discursive, imaginative, personified - that strengthen the network and hence the performance.

An indication of how this process of ramification works was already offered by the section introducing the TIM family, and the two following sections. From their initially localised areas of origin, the various concepts of regional salience have spread their wings incorporating new areas of spatial applicability, linking to broader questions of spatial-economic development, and enrolling each other to underpin conceptual universality and applicability. Core books were marshalled, like Piore and Sabel's *Second Industrial Divide* and Porter's *Competitive Advantage of Nations*. Core authors were invoked, like Granovetter, Williamson and Castells. Particular regional development cases were enrolled in the form of mesmerising story-images of regional success, like for Silicon Valley, the Third Italy and Baden-Württemberg. Other favourable evidence was selected corroborating the role of local linkages while non-local linkages received scant attention. Equally, while the most was made out of observed matching between regionally embedded institutions and regional economic performance, institutional factors and processes at other spatial levels remained largely out of focus.

Through the hard works of the concepts' advocates and their allies, concepts such as 'milieu', 'clusters', 'innovation system', and later 'institutional thickness' and 'untraded interdependencies' or 'conventions' turned into *nodal points* of the discourse of regional development. They have evolved as 'obligatory passage points' that have to be passed, whether authors subscribe to it or not. For instance, saying something sensible about sectoral regional development is hardly possible without mentioning clusters, whether in support or against this term. Writing about knowledge and regions will at some point lead to a reference to 'Regional Innovation Systems' or to 'Learning Regions'. In line with LATOUR (1990), core concepts come to represent rhetorical power by drawing together a complex and heterogeneous network of things. This network-based rhetorical power makes it very difficult to deliberately challenge the performance. In general, the most one achieves through intense criticising is disabling one or two supporting associations, for instance the discrediting of a case study (like Baden Württemberg, cf. BRACZYK/SCHIENSTOCK/STEFFENSON 1995) or theoretical basis (like transaction cost theory), without fundamentally affecting the whole construction. On the contrary, intense critique may even strengthen the position of a concept as a nodal point by showing its resilience to undercutting forces as well as by sharpening its performance.

This rhetorical power may help to explain why the large amount of critique and qualifications, some of which has been referred to above, has had relatively little impact on the message of regional salience. Admittedly, concepts have shifted and been superseded by new concepts. But this seems to reflect a process of internal ramifications more than a consequence of responding to fundamental external critique. The main effect has been a further sophistication of the central message of regional salience, that is, the region as an important site for production, innovation and even the becoming of capitalism. The question is thus, what factors have contributed to the success of the performance of regional salience? What are the sources of rhetorical power, what issues have so effectively supported the process of circulation, translation and ramification? The answers to these questions fall apart in two sets, one referring to the academic network, and one referring to the spiralling out of the network into the policy domain.

On the academic front, the seeds of regional salience emanated in the 1970s-80s from particular observations in the Third Italy and hi-tech regions, amongst others. The ideas fell immediately into highly fertile ground, for they seemed to show how regions could escape from the what was then regarded as almost inevitable and homogenising power of big business. Practice and theory showed the viability of regionally differentiated, flexible SME networks, framed within a *social* economy perspective, and supporting the notion of local industrial democracy. Especially the revival of the 'industrial district' concept can be explained by its capacity to grasp the imagination of socially, spatially and community minded thinkers about economic development. In the words of AMIN (2000, 152): "In short, the interest in industrial districts draws on a much wider fascination with a new phase of capitalism that is human-centred, democratic, and regionally oriented. It is also part of a new theoretical project: understanding the socio-institutional foundations and evolutionary processes of economic life" More recent concepts, such as 'milieu' and 'learning regions' added to this an orientation towards territorially sensitive models of socio-economic *learning* taking place outside the grand R&D laboratories of Big Business or the state. 'New Industrial Spaces', in addition, indicated how peripheral, 'virgin' areas, through providing a seedbed for new forms of flexible industrial organisation, could successfully challenge the centres locked into old, Fordist modes of production. There was a future outside big business, big state and big centres, after all.

Two further allies appeared when the discourse shifted from flexible production to globalisation, placing the region firmly within the debate on globalisation. First, the notion of spatial embedding, already part of the social economy perspective (HARRISON 1992), became tied to the concept of institutions and governance (MARTIN 2000). With their distinctive institutional capacity, regions appeared as effective sites of economic co-ordination under capitalism (HOLLINGSWORTH/BOYER 1997). Significantly, this meant that the economy was not primarily co-ordinated by the device so cherished by neo-liberal thinkers, namely the market, but that other, more social devices came into play, such as trust, solidarity and collective action. Hence, not only provided the region an alternative to Big Business, i.e. the 'hierarchy', but also to its counterpart, the 'market'.

The second ally was the notion of 'structural competitiveness' ('forms' competition), which stems from the idea that businesses competitiveness is largely grafted onto environmental embedding. Partly this idea was promoted by the innovation systems literature (CHESNAIS 1991), and partly through the seminal work of PORTER (1990). The result was that, with concepts such as 'regional innovation system' and 'clusters', the region emerged as a competitive entity in itself. Moreover, the notion of 'structural competitiveness' paved the way for the strategic turn in the literature, culminating in the shift from a more analytical-descriptive to an normative-prescriptive position. Turning more prescriptive and strategic made the message of regional salience less susceptible to empirical critique. As a prescription, the message of regional salience should not be read as a reflection of a reality in which every region hosts vibrant clusters and innovation networks, or has become a 'Regional World'. What the concepts reveal is that, on the basis of embedded unique competencies, the region offers a socio-economic platform and agenda for community survival in times of globalisation. The remark often made that regional salience seemed to imply a 'paradox' in times of globalisation is also likely to have contributed to the appeal of the message.

This academic journey has resulted in a fascinating network of conceptual associations, which ties in two very different sets of ideas and arguments. On the one hand, the emphasis on the region plays into the hands of more critical observers. For them, the region presents an essential vehicle against Big Business, the big state, and relentless market forces, in favour of local business, local knowledge and the community, thus countering the pervasive force and impact of globalisation. On the other hand, the literature seems to dovetail neatly with strategic management thinking. For strategically oriented writers, the region presents a site of competitiveness and wealth creation in a globalising world. The region could be perceived, in this view, as an 'upscaled' firm. Where in the past *firms*, on the basis of strategic competencies, competed in (inter)national *markets*, it is now *regions*, through spatially embedded competencies and relations, that compete in a *global market place*. Playing into the hands of both critical and strategic writers has proven a great source of rhetorical power for the literature on regional salience. Not unexpectedly, this combination also causes tensions and debate. Indeed, LOVERING's (1999, 391) critique well illustrates this tension when he claims that: "while many New Regionalists have thought of themselves as bringing Gramscian insights into regional development, (...) they have in fact been unwitting agents of the reconstruction of regional governance in Hayekian-liberal terms". Indeed, this seems to be a point where the network may well start to crack.

Lovering's critique also points at the major network that has unfolded around the ideas of regional salience across the policy domain. LOVERING's (1999, p. 390) own point is that the notion of regional salience played into the hands of what he calls a 'new regional service class', consisting of economic development and business support professionals working in the public (regional authorities, research) as well as private sector (consultancies) or in between (Regional Development Agencies). In Lovering's view the impact of

policy links have been very influential, even when it comes down to conceptual development: "It is impossible to resist the conclusion that the policy tail is wagging the analytical dog and wagging it so hard indeed that much of the theory is shaken out" (p. 390).

Why, then, has the network of regional salience spiralled out so forcefully into the policy domain? GLASMEIER (2000) has thoroughly examined the way economic geographic concepts have been embedded in policy prescriptions. In her observation, policy-makers were inspired particularly by the insights arising from the literature on New Industrial spaces, flexible specialisation and Porter's clusters, resulting in a new wave of regional and urban policies in the 1990s: "Almost overnight a new policy domain had been chartered as local and state governments quickly latched on to the new buzz words of networks, clusters, external economies and so on" (GLASMEIER 2000, 564). In Europe, in addition, the concept of 'regional innovation systems' gained strong popularity through the mobilising power of the EU (COOKE/MORGAN 1998). The EU, with its strong regional orientation, stands out as a travel agency for regional development concepts. For this position the EU can draw on its massive financial and organisational capacity to support and maintain strong links with academics, consultants and regional policy-makers across Europe. As said before, the regional agenda serves the EU interest in creating laboratories of innovation as well as its ambitions towards spatial cohesion. Other prominent international 'travel agents' promoting journeys for regional development concepts are the OECD and UNIDO. Especially the latter has been very influential in advocating the cluster concept in the developing world. These travel agencies act as organisational 'nodal points' in the world of regional policy-making.

Not only for the EU, but also for national and regional levels, the regional development agenda coming up in the late 80s and 90s served a variety of goals that were pertinent in times dominated by a dual emphasis on technology and the market. While technology and other supply-side oriented programmes had been part of business support for some time across the globe, results had generally been disappointing (LAGENDIJK 1999). The regional agenda presented a vehicle to reorganise business support, with more emphasis on local context, customisation and integration. More fundamentally, the regional scale provided a route for policy-makers to donate structural support to business communities without directly supporting firms. In doing so, policy could comply with the condition stemming from neo-liberal approaches that support should not 'distort' market competition by favouring particular firms. On top of that, the regional development agenda coincided well with political processes of regionalisation and the rising influence of regionalism across the globe. As a result, a strong alliance developed between the performance of *regional economic salience*, i.e. the local nurturing of rooted competencies and regional governance structures, and the performance of political *regionalism*, i.e. the search for and manifestation of a regional identity and self-determination. Moreover, both policy-makers and academic reporters have been keen on disseminating stories of alleged success (cf. HUDSON/DUNFORD/HAMILTON/KÖTTER 1997), thus

increasing the justification for further pursuing a regional development agenda.

Just as academics, policy-makers narrate and perform the region, although in a different way and with a different effect. In many countries, they have expanded staff within regional authorities and public services accompanied by an (even more than proportionate) devolution of responsibilities. They have supported the establishment of regional organisations, the nurturing of regional networks and clusters, the (re)organisation of business support and economic development policy along regional lines, and the production of regional surveys and statistics. They have financed an endless stream of policy-oriented research on regional development and business support by consultants and research centres, focusing on SMEs, local linkages, local institutions, etc. A central theme in the policy discourse has been the role of local 'co-operation' in shaping regional competitiveness (cf. ROSENFELD 1996; COOKE/MORGAN 1998). In doing so, policy-makers have also contributed to the discursive opposition of the region 'in here' against the world 'out there', promoting the image of the region as a strategic entity in global competition. They have advocated the use of SWOT-analysis, Roundtables and Regional Development Agencies to strengthen the strategic image of the region and its enactment. Picturing a world in which regions compete with each other and should prevent the leaking out of unique knowledge, actually *moulds* and *sustains* the practice of interregional competition. An example is that business corporations, through dealing with regional development agencies, have learnt to play off regions against each other by behaving as potentially footloose (GLASMEIER 2000). So whereas regional policy is justified on the basis of alleged 'footloose' business behaviour, in reality the 'footloose' performance of business corporations often is an opportunistic response to regional policy concerns and practices, to maximise public subsidy. This point well illustrates the idea that a concept may create the reality which it claims to respond to.

One could argue, at this point, that the policy performance only follows academic performance, and that the crude and opportunistic application of regional concepts by policy-makers is due to practices and rituals germane to the policy domain. However, as both LOVERING (1999) and GLASMEIER (2000) argue, that ignores the way policy-makers and academics interact. According to Lovering, much of the 'vulgarisation' is already implied within the academic work itself. An example is how, in terms of the discussion above, the notions of 'structural competitiveness' and 'spatial embedding' pave the way for an uncritical positioning of the region as a strategic entity. Glasmeier observes how academics are generally naïve about the way their work is used in political arenas and policy-making. While academics are generally happy to carry out contract research, and to sit on regional and (inter)national advisory bodies, they are reluctant to engage in the day-to-day world of policy-making. What remains in the air, as a consequence, is a more critical discussion of the goals of regional development, and of the question how particular initiatives and ventures *within* a region may make a significant contribution to the development *of* the region.



Academic and policy performances of regional salience are intimately linked. They form, in other words, a network in which academic and policy roles often coincide and overlap. This is not to deny that academics play a distinct and often separate role. Indeed, Lovering's idea quoted before that 'the policy tail is wagging the analytical dog' may well be overstated. Academics have helped to create a logic of regional development, based on notions such as embedding, proximity, competencies and associations. Policy makers have helped to circulate and script these ideas, to inscribe them in policy approaches and practices, to mobilise assisting resources and actors, thus making it happen. New frames of references have emerged, that now give meaning to regional co-operation, to proximity and regional organisations, and that help new regional initiatives to perform. Through the enactment of particular 'representational practices', and the shaping of 'contending frames of reality' (MACLEOD/GOODWIN 1999, 711), the region is *produced* as a significant scale and site of innovation and production. A fundamental question is, for how long, and in what shape, the performance of regional salience will continue to be so influential. This paper has identified many counterarguments and counterforces which may weaken the network. However, it is only when new performances manage to replace or supersede the present one that a new 'orthodoxy' may evolve. This is not just a matter of arguments and counterarguments, but of political struggle in which we, as academics, are deeply implicated.

## Conclusion

The three stories of 'regional worlds', 'political mobilisation', and 'performativity' can be read in different ways. On the one hand, they present distinct perspectives on why the region is seen as a significant site of innovation, production, and policy-making. The three stories present different logics with different protagonists, namely the social-institutional economy, political actors and the concepts and authors of regional concepts themselves. Distinguishing between these perspectives may help to clarify the position of the manifold arguments and authors endorsing, or criticising, stories of regional salience. In particular, the various perspectives shed some on light on the confusion and fuzziness that accompanies the use of concepts such as competencies, embedding, institutions and governance. They also help to clarify the complex interaction between the more descriptive-analytical and prescriptive-strategic dimensions of the discourse on regional development.

On the other hand, the concepts may also be read in conjunction with each other. The political story, both in its coalition and regulatory forms, brings to the fore the importance of political analysis, of highlighting which actors have an interest in regional development and why they pursue these interests, and which political processes mould the position of the region. However, the issue of performativity illustrates that just pointing at the influence of political actors or processes is not sufficient. The concepts and authors of regional development themselves also exert power. More precisely, they accumulate rhetorical power through building alliances with images of successful regions, popular academic discourses and supporting evidence, as well as through

playing into the hands of political actors. So it is not only thorough political analysis but also profound self-reflection that should accompany research on regional salience.

What, then, about the 'Regional Worlds' story? This paper has upheld some of criticisms of recent institutional-economic writings on the regions, and added new points. The emphasis on proximity and the region as a strategic unit should be qualified. Much of the features attributed to *regions*, notably concerning the role of inter-organisational relations and conventions, should be attributed to *spatialised networks*. Such networks may, under certain economic and political circumstances, take a primarily regional form but many stretch much further. Rather than fixating on Regional Worlds, more research should be devoted to 'worlds of production' that transcend the regional level, looking at the intersection of such (inter)national worlds and regions. Consequently, understanding this intersection may benefit from insights from the political and performativity story. What happens at the regional level when regional innovation and production networks are nurtured and when associational governance structures are created is not the enactment of a 'localisation' script following a determinate institutional-economic logic as reflected in the concepts of regional salience. On the contrary, concepts of regional salience help to create the reality - both discursive and political - that make these concepts work, that make them perform. That does not devalue the basic insights derived from institutional-economic reasoning, such as about the role of (organisational-institutional) proximity and associational trends, but it changes the ontological and epistemological perspectives in which these insights should be framed. Not many may be prepared to accept such a change, but it could present a fruitful path towards critical and productive self-reflection and, perhaps, a new generation of concepts better able to deal with the regional phenomenon.

## References

- ÁCS, Z.J. (2000): Endogenous Technical Change, Entrepreneurship and Regional Growth. In: Fischer, M.M./Fröhlich, J. (eds.): Knowledge, Complexity and Innovation Systems. Springer-Verlag/ Berlin, 228-247.
- ALDERMAN, N. (2000): Distributed Knowledge in Complex Engineering Project Networks: Implications for Regional Innovation Systems. CURDS, University of Newcastle/ Newcastle upon Tyne.
- AMIN, A. (1999): An Institutional Perspective On Regional Development. In: International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (22), 365-378.
- AMIN, A. (2000): Industrial Districts. In: Sheppard, E./Barnes, T. (eds.): A Companion to Economic Geography. Blackwell/ Oxford, 149-168.
- AMIN, A./THRIFT, N. (1992): Neo-Marshallian Nodes in Global Networks. In: International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (16)4, 571-587.
- AMIN, A./THRIFT, N. (1994): Holding Down the Global. In: Amin, A./Thrift, N. (eds.): Globalization, Institutions and Regional Development in Europe. Oxford University Press/ Oxford, 257-260.
- AMIN, A./THRIFT, N. (1995): Institutional Issues for the European Regions - From Markets and Plans to Socioeconomics and Powers of Association. In: Economy and Society (24)1, 41-66.
- ASHEIM, B.T. (1992): Flexible Specialisation, Industrial Districts and Small Firms: A Critical Appraisal. In: Ernste, H./Meier, V. (eds.): Regional Development and Contemporary Responses. Expanding Flexible Specialization. Belhaven Press/ London, 45-63.
- ASHEIM, B.T. (1996): Industrial Districts As 'Learning Regions': A Condition for Prosperity. In: European Planning Studies (4)4, 379-399.
- BARNES, T.J. (2000): Performing Economic Geography: A History of Actors, Scripts, Props, Ensembles and Scenes. University of British Columbia, Dept. of Geography/ Vancouver.
- BELLINI, N. (1998): Planning the Learning Region. Paper presented at the seminar on "The Learning Region", Tilburg University, 27 March 1998.
- BRACZYK, H.-J./SCHIENSTOCK, G./STEFFENSON, B. (1995): The Region of Baden-Württemberg: A Post-Fordist Success Story? In: Dittrich, E.J./Schmidt, G./Whitley, R. (eds.): Industrial Transformation in Europe. Process and Context. Sage/ London, .
- BRAMANTI, A./MAGGIONE, M.A. (1997): The Dynamics of Milieux. The Network Analysis Approach. In: Ratti, R./Bramanti, A./Gordon, R. (eds.): The Dynamics of Innovative Regions. The Gremi Approach. Ashgate/ Aldershot UK, 321-342.
- BRESCHI, S./MALERBA, F. (1996): Sectoral Innovation Systems: Technological Regimes, Schumpeterian Dynamics and Spatial Boundaries. In: Edquist, C. (ed.):

Systems of Innovation: Technologies, Institutions and Organizations. Pinter/ London, 130-156.

BURMEISTER, A. (2000): Accessibility Versus Proximity in Production Relations. In: Green, M.B./McNaughton, R.B. (eds.): Industrial Networks and Proximity. Ashgate/ Aldershot, Hants, UK, 47-68.

CAMAGNI, R.P. (1995): The Concept of Innovative Milieu and Its Relevance for Public Policies in European Lagging Regions. In: Papers in regional science (74)4, 317-340.

CHARLES, D.R./FENG, L. (1994): Lean Production, Supply Management and New Industrial Dynamics: Logistics in the Automobile Industry. CURDS, University of Newcastle/ Newcastle upon Tyne.

CHESNAIS, F. (1991): Technological Competitiveness Considered As a Form of Structural Competitiveness. In: Niosi, J. (ed.): Technology and National Competitiveness. Oligopoly, Technological Innovation, and International Competition. McGill-Queen's University Press/ Montreal, 142-176.

COOKE, P. (1992): Regional Innovation Systems - Competitive Regulation in the New Europe. In: Geoforum (23)3, 365-382.

COOKE, P. (1998): Introduction: Origin of the Concept. In: Braszyk, H.-J./Cooke, P./Heinderich, M. (eds.): Regional Innovation Systems. UCL Press/ London, 2-25.

COOKE, P./MORGAN, K. (1998): The Associational Economy: Firms, Regions and Innovation. Oxford University Press/ Oxford.

CORNFORD, J./NAYLOR, R./ROBINS, K. (2000): New Media and Regional Development. In: Giunta, A./Lagendijk, A./Pike, A. (eds.): Restructuring Industry and Territory: The Experience of Europe's Regions. HMSO/ London, 83-108.

CREVOISIER, O./MAILLAT, D. (1991): Milieu, Industrial Organization and Territorial Production System: Towards a New Theory of Spatial Development. In: Camagni, R. (ed.): Innovation Networks. Spatial Perspectives. Belhaven Press/ London, 13-34.

CURRAN, J./BLACKBURN, R. (1994): Small Firms and Local Economic Networks. The Death of the Local Economy? Paul Chapman Publishing/ London.

DIGIOVANNA, S. (1996): Industrial Districts and Regional Economic-Development - A Regulation Approach. In: Regional Studies (30)4, 373-386.

ECHEVERRI-CARROLI, E.L./BRENNAN, W. (1999): Are Innovation Networks Bounded By Proximity? In: Fischer, M.M./Steiner, M./Suarez-Villa, L. (eds.): Innovation, Networks and Localities. Springer/ London, 28-49.

EDQUIST, C./REES, G. (2000): Learning Regions and Cities: Learning in Regional Innovation Systems - A Conceptual Framework. Linköping University/ Linköping.

ENNALS, R./GUSTAVSEN, B. (1999): Work Organization and Europe As a Development Coalition. Benjamins/ Amsterdam.

ENRIGHT, M.J. (1994): Regional Clusters and Economic Development: A Research Agenda. Paper presented to a Conference on Regional Clusters and Business Networks, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, 18-20 Nov., 1993.

GERTLER, M.S. (1999): The Production of Industrial Processes: Regions, Nation States and the Foundation of Regulation. In: Barnes, T.J./Gertler, M.S. (eds.): The New Industrial Geography. Routledge/ London, 225-237.

GLASMEIER, A.K. (2000): Economic Geography in Practice: Local Economic Development Policy. In: Clark, G.L./Feldman, M.P./Gertler, M.S. (eds.): The Oxford Handbook of Economic Geography. Oxford University Press/ Oxford, 559-579.

HARRISON, B. (1992): Industrial Districts: Old Wine in New Bottles? In: Regional Studies (26)5, 469-484.

HAY, C. (1995): Re-Stating the Problem of Regulation and Re-Regulating the Local State. In: Economy and Society (24)3, 387-407.

HEALEY, P./KHAKEE, A./MOTTE, A./NEEDHAM, B. (eds.) (1997): Making Strategic Spatial Plans: Innovation in Europe. UCL Press/ London.

HOLLINGSWORTH, J.R./BOYER, R. (1997): Coordination of Economic Actors and Social Systems of Production. In: Hollingsworth, J.R./Boyer, R. (eds.): Contemporary Capitalism: The Embeddedness of Institutions. Cambridge University Press/ Cambridge UK, 1-47.

HUDSON, R./DUNFORD, M./HAMILTON, D./ KÖTTER, R. (1997): Developing Regional Strategies for Economic Success: Lessons from Europe's Economically Successful Regions. In: European Urban and Regional Studies (4), 365-373.

KANTER, R.M. (1995): World Class. Simian and Schuster/ New York.

KARLSSON, C./MANDUCHI, A. (2000): Knowledge Spillovers in a Spatial Context - A Critical Review and Assessment. Jönköping International Business School/ Jönköping.

KEATING, M. (1998): The New Regionalism in Western Europe. Territorial Restructuring and Political Change. Edward Elgar/ Cheltenham, UK.

KEEBLE, D./WILKINSON, F. (1999): Collective Learning and Knowledge Development in the Evolution of Regional Clusters of High Technology SMEs in Europe. In: Regional Studies (33)4, 295-303.

LAGENDIJK, A. (1997): From New Industrial Spaces to Regional Innovation Systems and Beyond. How and from Whom Should Industrial Geography Learn? CURDS, University of Newcastle/ Newcastle upon Tyne.

LAGENDIJK, A. (1999): Good Practices in SME Cluster Initiatives. Lessons from the 'Core' Regions and Beyond. CURDS, University of Newcastle/ Newcastle upon Tyne.

LAGENDIJK, A./KRAMSCH, O. (2001): Reconceptualizing the "New Regionalism": From a Managerial to an Anthropologically Inflected Cultural Turn? Nijmegen School of Management/ Nijmegen.

- LAGENDIJK, A./RUTTEN, R.P.J.H. (2002): Associational Dilemmas in Regional Innovation Strategy Development: Regional Innovation Support Organisations and the RIS/ RITTS Programmes. In: Bakkers, S./Rutten, R.P.J.H./Boekema, F. (eds.): Universities, Knowledge Infrastructure and the Learning Region. Edward Elgar/ Aldershot, forthcoming.
- LATOUR, B. (1990): Drawing Things Together. In: Lynch, M./Woolgar, S. (eds.): Representations in Scientific Practice. MIT Press/ Cambridge, Mass, 19-69.
- LAW, J. (1999): After ANT: Complexity, Naming and Topology. In: Law, J./Hassard, J. (eds.): Actor Network Theory and After. Blackwell/ Oxford, 1-14.
- LAWSON, C. (1999): Towards a Competence Theory of the Region. In: Cambridge Journal of Economics (23)2, 151-166.
- LOVERING, J. (1999): Theory Led By Policy: The Inadequacies of 'The New Regionalism'. In: International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (22), 379-395.
- LUNDVALL, B.-Å. (1993): Explaining Interfirm Cooperation and Innovation. Limits of the Transaction-Cost Approach. In: Grabher, G. (ed.): The Embedded Firm. On the Socioeconomics of Industrial Networks. Routledge/ London and New York, 52-64.
- MACLEOD, G. (1999): Reflections On the New Regionalism in Economic Development. Dept. of Geography, University of Durham/ Durham.
- MACLEOD, G./GOODWIN, M. (1999): Reconstructing an Urban and Regional Political Economy: On the State, Politics, Scale, and Explanation. In: Political Geography (18)6, 697-730.
- MARKUSEN, A. (1996): Sticky Places in Slippery Space - A Typology of Industrial Districts. In: Economic Geography (72)3, 293-313.
- MARKUSEN, A. (1998): Fuzzy Concepts, Scanty Evidence, Wimpy Policy: The Case for Rigor and Policy Relevance in Critical Regional Studies. In: Regional Studies (33), 869-884.
- MARTIN, R. (2000): Institutional Approaches in Economic Geography. In: Sheppard, E./Barnes, T. (eds.): A Companion to Economic Geography. Blackwell/ Oxford, 77-94.
- MASKELL, P. (1999): Globalisation and Industrial Competitiveness. The Process and Consequences of Ubiquitification. In: Malecki, E.J./Oinas, P. (eds.): Making Connections: Technological Learning and Regional Economic Change. Ashgate/ Aldershot, 35-60.
- MASKELL, P./MALMBERG, A. (1999): Localised Learning and Industrial Competitiveness. In: Cambridge Journal of Economics (23)2, 167-185.
- MCNAUGHTON, R.B. (2000): Industrial Districts and Social Capital. In: Green, M.B./McNaughton, R.B. (eds.): Industrial Networks and Proximity. Ashgate/ Aldershot, Hants, UK, 69-85.
- MOULAERT, F./SEKIA, F. (1999): Innovative Region, Social Region? An Alternative View of Regional Innovation. University of Lille I./ Dept. of Economics.

OINAS, P./MALECKI, E.J. (1999): Spatial Innovation Systems. In: Malecki, E.J./Oinas, P. (eds.): Making Connections: Technological Learning and Regional Economic Change. Ashgate/ Aldershot, 7-33.

PECK, J. (2000): Doing Regulation. In: Clark, G.L./Feldman, M.P./Gertler, M.S. (eds.): The Oxford Handbook of Economic Geography. Oxford University Press/ Oxford, 61-80.

PECK, J./TICKELL, A. (1994): Jungle Law Breaks Out - Neoliberalism and Global-Local Disorder. In: Area (26)4, 317-326.

PIKE, A./LAGENDIJK, A./VALE, M. (2000): Critical Reflections On 'Embeddedness' in Economic Geography: Labour Market Governance in the North East Region of England. In: Giunta, A./Lagendijk, A./Pike, A. (eds.): Restructuring Industry and Territory: The Experience of Europe's Regions. TSO/ London, 59-82.

PORTER, M.E. (1990): The Competitive Advantage of Nations. Macmillan/ London.

PORTER, M.E. (2000): Locations, Clusters and Company Strategy. In: Clark, G.L./Feldman, M.P./Gertler, M.S. (eds.): The Oxford Handbook of Economic Geography. Oxford University Press/ Oxford, 253-274.

ROSENFELD, S.A. (1996): Does Cooperation Enhance Competitiveness - Assessing the Impacts of Interfirm Collaboration. In: Research Policy (25)2, 247-263.

SABEL, C.F. (1992): Studied Trust: Building New Forms of Co-Operation. In: Pyke, F./Sengenberger, W. (eds.): Industrial Districts and Local Economic Regeneration. International Institute for Labour Studies/ Geneva, 215-250.

SCHOENBERGER, E. (1999): The Firm in the Region, and the Region in the Firm. In: Barnes, T.J./Gertler, M.S. (eds.): The New Industrial Geography. Routledge/ London, 205-224.

SCOTT, A.J. (1983): Industrial Organization and the Logic of Intra-Metropolitan Location: I. Theoretical Considerations. In: Economic Geography (59)3, 233-250.

SCOTT, A.J./STORPER, M. (eds.) (1986): Production, Work, Territory: The Geographical Anatomy of Industrial Capitalism. George Allen and Unwin/ London.

STERNBERG, R. (1999): Innovative Linkages and Proximity - Empirical Results from Recent Surveys of Small and Medium Sized Firms in German Regions. In: Regional Studies (33)6, 529-540.

STORPER, M. (1995): The Resurgence of Regional Economies, Ten Years Later: The Region As a Nexus of Untraded Interdependencies. In: European Urban and Regional Studies (2)3, 191-221.

STORPER, M. (1997): The Regional World. Guildford Press/ New York.

SWYNGEDOUW, E. (1997): Neither Global Not Local: 'Glocalization' and the Politics of Scale. In: Cox, K. (ed.): Spaces of Globalization. Reasserting the Power of the Local. Guildford/ New York, 137-166.

SWYNGEDOUW, E. (2000): Elite Power, Global Forces and the Political Economy of Glocal Development. In: Clark, G.L./Feldman, M.P./Gertler, M.S. (eds.): The Oxford Handbook of Economic Geography. Oxford University Press/ Oxford, 541-579.

WRIGHT, V. (1998): Intergovernmental Relations and Regional Government in Europe: A Sceptical View. In: Le Galès, P./Lequesne, C. (eds.): Regions in Europe. Routledge/ London, 39-49.

ZEITLIN, J. (1992): Industrial Districts and Local Economic Regeneration: Overview and Comment. In: Pyke, F./Sengenberger, W. (eds.): Industrial Districts and Local Economic Regeneration. International Institute for Labour Studies/ Geneva, 279-294.

---

<sup>i</sup> Paper presented at the IGU Conference on Local Development, Issues of Competition, Collaboration and Territoriality, Turin, 10-14 July 2001